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SAFEGUARDING YOUR FOOD AND DRUGS

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A series of radio talks by W. R. M. Wharton, chief, eastern district, Food, Drug and Insecticide Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m. Eastern Standard Time through WJZ., New York and the following other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company: KWK, St. Louis; WREN, Kansas City, KEAB, Lincoln; WRC, Washington; WBZA, Boston; KSTP, St. Paul; WSM, Nashville; WAPI, Birmingham, WJX, Jacksonville; WPTF, Raleigh; WRVA Richmond.

Good morning my radio friends. -- I am, as you well know, your Government representative telling you how your foods and drugs are safe-guarded through the enforcement of the Federal Food and Drugs Act, and telling you how to read food and drug labels. Did you hear my talk last week on the deadly form of food poisoning known as Botulism and how to safe-guard against it? Did you hear my recent talk on vitamins? Copies of these and all of my read-the-label information will be sent to you free for the asking.

My story today will be about a thwarted attempt to bring a rotten food product into the United States from a foreign country. Not so long ago, a large consignment of tomato paste in cans reached one of the principal Atlantic seaboard Ports from a foreign country. Now my friends, practically all food products offered for import into the United States are tested by your Federal Food and Drug Inspectors and none but pure and wholesome products are allowed access. This large shipment of tomato paste intended for your tables to be used as sauce for macaroni and other home-cooked products was tested in one of the many chemical laboratories maintained by the Food and Drug Administration and it was found to have been made from rotten tomatoes. Entry was denied, of course. It had no right to come into this country where the purity of the food supply is maintained on a high standard and orders were issued forthwith for its exportation. We said to the shipper, in effect, "Take this rotten product back where you made it, we don't want it here in the United States", and so this large consignment of tomato paste was exported. It made the long journey back over the Atlantic to the country where it was produced, but before it went, your Federal Food and Drug Inspector having a suspicion that the shipper might attempt some monkey business later, placed on the cases a small mark, a secret mark of his own. This is not unusual. Your inspectors often put secret marks on cases of foods and drugs for future identification. Well, time went on, a few months later, a large consignment of tomato paste of the same brand was offered for entry at another distant Atlantic seaport. This shipment was even larger than the first. It was examined by another Food and Drug Inspector and of course he had been advised to be on the lookout for the private mark, which was placed on the outlaw goods, which had been previously exported, and Lo! and Behold! standing out as plain as day, if you knew where to find it on cases scattered through this lot, was the little secret mark which the inspector at the first port had placed on the cases. The foreign shipper thought he was smart. He thought that if he mixed the old rejected shipment with a lot of cases of a new product, possibly the bad product would pass into the United States along with the good; but my friends, his plans went awry, due to the vigilance of your Food and Drug officials and their zeal in protecting your food and drug supply. Again, the goods were required to be

exported and in connection with this and other irregularities, the exporter of these goods was required to pay a penalty of \$14,669.00. I imagine he will not attempt any more monkey business of this sort.

Now, my friends, my Read-the-Label talk today will deal with preparation known as pudding powders and other ready prepared desserts. There are many products of this character on the market and they have a large sale because they are supposed to furnish a quick and easy means for the housewife to prepare a dessert. Many such preparations serve a very useful purpose due to the ease of preparation of the dessert and because they make delicious desserts, but, my friends, if you are to be sure that you are getting your money's worth when you buy such articles of food, you must read the labels and I propose to tell you why and how. Now you all know that for dessert making three items are essential in the kitchen. They are milk, eggs and sugar.

Practically all the cookbooks provide for the use of milk, eggs and sugar in the making of puddings. In addition to these important and very nutritious ingredients, generally, cookbook recipes call for a small amount of cornstarch, a proper flavor, and in some cases for the addition of a small amount of butter and sometimes of baking powder. When you buy a product in powdered form in packages labeled as a "Pudding Powder," you are entitled to get a product made with the recognized ingredients for the type of pudding designated, such as powdered whole milk, dried powdered eggs, sugar and flavor, as the type may require, and it is legitimate for these products to contain a small amount of cornstarch or flour, or ground tapioca, or Arrowroot flour. All such powders, however, do not contain these ingredients, and when they do not contain the essential ingredients of a pudding powder they will be generally labeled with a fanciful name, which brings us to the next class of prepared dessert preparations. Such powders sometimes are composed only of cornstarch, flavor and color and when made with such composition, they will be labeled "To be used with eggs and milk and sugar to make puddings" or some equivalent phrase and then the directions will give the quantity of the additional materials to be used. The composition of these preparations vary. Some will contain sugar in addition to the ingredients named; others may contain dried, whole milk or dried, skimmed milk, while still others may have some dried eggs in them. And let me say here that when such preparations contain any milk powder, that generally is skimmed milk powder. Now my label reading friends, don't you see how important it is to read labels on this class of preparations. It makes a lot of difference as to whether or not you are paying at the rate of \$.70 a pound for flavored cornstarch or whether you are paying at that rate for a complete dessert preparation.

Then too, you should read the labels on this class of preparations to determine the nature of the flavoring material. If you buy a chocolate flavored dessert preparation, you should read the label to determine whether the product is flavored with chocolate or whether it is flavored with cocoa, cocoa is chocolate with some of the cocoa fat removed. If the flavor is derived from cocoa, the label will call the product "Chocolate Flavored" for it can only be a "Chocolate Dessert" if it is flavored with chocolate. If the flavor is an artificial one, the label will tell you of this fact. If it is a "true fruit flavor" the label will tell you so. If the product is artificially colored, the label will so advise you.

Another class of dessert preparations which are sold in powdered form are the so-called pie filler powders and chief among these is the so-

called lemon pie filler powder. Now our cookbooks tell us that pie fillings, in general, should be made from eggs, sugar and milk with a small amount of starch flour. In the case of lemon pie filling, the cookbooks call for a real lemon with the grated rind. Consequently, a product labeled and sold as a lemon pie filling should be composed of dried eggs, sugar, a small amount of flour or starch, and the dried juice of lemons. Now when products sold for making lemon pies are not of this composition they are generally labeled as being "a combination of ingredients to be used with milk or eggs, (or whatever the deficient ingredients are) as an aid in making lemon pie." The same considerations apply for other varieties of powdered pie fillings, much as custard pie filling, chocolate pie filling, etc. Do you^{not} think that you ought to learn to read the labels on this class of preparations if you are to determine that you are buying wisely when you pay your money for prepared dessert preparations? In other words, isn't it incumbent upon you to know what you are getting, in order to determine whether you are getting what you want?

With respect to flavors of these products, you may read the labels to determine if lemon oil in capsule or otherwise is furnished to give the flavor to a lemon pie filling, it will produce an acceptably flavored product, but it will not be the same, of course, as a lemon pie made from the juice of the lemon, and if lemon oil is used, you will probably find that either citric or tartaric acid is used, also, this to give an acid taste. If the fillings are otherwise artificially flavored the labels will tell you so and the same is true if they are artificially colored. Now, my friends, practically all the considerations I have outlined apply also to packaged preparations for making blanc mange, icecream, custards, sauces and cake fillings. Read the labels on these classes of prepared preparations in like manner.

Now, another class of dessert preparations are the so-called gelatin desserts. In general, these consist of a powdered mixture of gelatin, sugar, citric or tartaric acid, a dried color and a small amount of flavor. The main consideration for the label readers of this class of preparations is to read the labels to determine whether the flavors used are imitation flavors, grape fruit concentrated flavors, or really the juices of fruits. Citric or tartaric acid, when contained, usually are declared on labels as fruit acid, since citric acid comes from lemons and tartaric acid comes from grapes.

We have still another class of preparations which are sold as short cuts to the dessert makers and these are the so-called wine jellies, or preparations for making wine jellies. These so-called wine jellies are not jellies in the sense of being made from fruit or sugar but they are really wine flavored gelatin preparations or wine flavored pectin preparations, since either gelatin or pectin may be used as a solidifying agent. Read the label to determine the composition of such products. Gelatin is normally not a proper ingredient of jelly and neither is added pectin but by long usage gelatin has become to be considered a normal agent for the purpose of making wine jelly with sugar and wine. Calves' foot jelly is essentially the same thing. Wine is permitted under the Prohibition Department to be used in solid food preparations when the company manufacturing same has a permit to do so. Only sufficient wine is permitted to be used which will give to the finished product not over five per cent of alcohol.

There is still another class of prepared dessert preparations to which I wish to refer and this is the so-called meringue powders. According to the

cookbooks, meringues are made with the whites of eggs and sugar and flavoring, but the packaged preparations sold to be used as meringue powders usually are made from such ingredients as cornstarch, sugar Karaya Gum or Gum Tragacanth, powdered egg albumen, salt, and some have soda alum in them. Read the labels to determine just exactly what you are getting when you buy meringue powders.

Now, my friends, I am making an earnest effort to be of constructive help to you. I want to make each and every one of you intelligent label readers and therefore discriminating, careful and economical buyers. Do you want to be able to furnish the best for your family table and do you want to save money in your marketing. If you do, learn to read labels. You may learn by familiarizing yourselves with all of my read-the-label broadcasts which you may have for the asking. Write to W. R. M. Wharton, United States Department of Agriculture, 201 Varick Street, New York City.

I will be with you again next week at this hour to tell you another personal experience story and to tell you how to read labels on canned salmon, and canned Tuna fish.

I thank you.